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ABSTRACT

The document focuses on the impact of the cooperating teacher on the attitudes and behavior of the student special education teacher. The need for reform in teacher education which would produce more field based teacher training experience earlier is pointed out, and components of the Millersville State College (PA) undergraduate special education program are reviewed. Characteristics of outstanding teachers are listed, and research on teacher effectiveness is reviewed. The authors discuss the effects of cooperating teacher's teaching style and age on the attitudes and behavior of the students. The impact of the cooperating teacher on the student teacher's attitudes and behavior is stressed. Guidelines for the cooperating teacher to follow in enhancing the possibility of the student teacher's progress are given. (SBH)

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EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES: THE MATCH BETWEEN COOPERATING TEACHER AND STUDENT TEACHER

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EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES: THE MATCH BETWEEN COOPERATING TEACHER AND STUDENT TEACHER

Excellent teacher training is not cheap. To have quality teacher education programs will require a high degree of laboratory, clinical and field work, which, if adequately provided, may be more expensive in terms of both finances and instructor time than is the lecture/discussion mode which dominates the higher educational scene (Warner & Scott, 1979). Nevertheless, teacher education seems to be the cheapest of almost all programs funded at the university and college level.

More than 1,500 universities and colleges offer teacher education curricula, yet, according to Monahan (1977), teacher preparation is adequately accomplished by merely thirty percent of the present institutions of higher learning. It appears that the higher education institutions are living with the constraints of a four-year baccalaureate pattern in which only about twenty-five semester hours are devoted to courses related to actual preparation for teaching. (This is equivalent to approximately a six month training program.)

Many educators recommend establishing a minimum of five years of preparation for teachers (Reynolds, 1979; Joyce, Yarger, Howey, Harbeck, & Kluwin, 1977). In fact, Egbert & Kluender (1979) predict that up to one-fourth of all states will require five-year programs by 1985. Numerous teacher training models are being

advocated for the improvement of both the training components and the delivery systems provided the pre- and in-service teachers.

How does the public schools and the university or college collaborate in developing future teachers? Some teacher training models contain extensive community participation (Ruchkin, 1974; Bush, 1977; Hunt, 1971) and other models are being based in the newly established teacher centers throughout the nation (Lovett & Schmeider, 1978; Schmeider & Yarger, 1974; McIntyre, 1978). The contemporary federal teacher centers, with emphasis on greater teacher voice in the planning and delivery of services, is only one manifestation of the concerted effort to upgrade teacher education.

Regardless of the models being utilized, higher education institutions should ally themselves more with field-based training programs to ensure that the teacher will fit comfortably into the existing educational system AND will have the tools necessary to fulfill the traditional teaching roles within our society (Joyce, Yarger, Howey, Harbeck, & Kluwin, 1978). There seems to be a consensus of agreement among pre-and in-service teachers that there needs to be a reform in teacher education - a reform that would produce more field-based teacher training experience earlier (Sorenson, 1974). An extensive listing of references for models and teacher training materials are provided by Reynolds & Birch (1977).

The Bureau of the Handicapped estimates a future demand for 305,000 special education teachers to meet the needs of exceptional

children and youth because new court rulings and current laws now compel states to provide every handicapped student with an education in the least restrictive environment. In general, colleges of education are under no mandate to implement specific changes in teacher education analogous to those faced by the public schools (Meyen, 1979). However, at Millersville State College in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Special Education undergraduate program is a four year plan which has developed out of a need to provide teachers with training in classes for the mentally retarded, the brain injured, the emotionally disturbed, the physically handicapped, and the learning disabled. In September 1977, when the state of Pennsylvania discontinued awarding single categorical teaching certificates in Special Education, the Comprehensive Certificate replaced the old certificate that identified only one area of exceptionality.

The core of the Millersville State College undergraduate's Special Education program consists of educational prescriptive teaching and methods eminated from four specific courses: principles of learning management, prescriptive teaching of severely handicapped, and two courses in prescriptive teaching of moderately handicapped - one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level. The general elementary education block, consisting of three courses in the areas of mathematics, inquiry skills, and language arts, provides an additional component of teaching methods for first semester juniors. An industrial arts course, an art or a music course, the speech problems course,

and a specific course designed for teaching physical education to the handicapped, are necessary components for obtaining a quality program and for satisfying Pennsylvania's standards for certification in Special Education.

The Field Experiences in Special Education semester is recommended during the junior year. The college professors provide instruction on campus during the first ten weeks. The undergraduates are then assigned to two different types of special education classes for a period of three weeks each. Ideally, the undergraduates are given the opportunity of working (1) in a class of severely handicapped students, and (2) in a class of moderately handicapped students, either at the elementary or the secondary level.

The undergraduates, provided a semester of student teaching during their senior year, receive one assignment with moderately handicapped students (i.e., educable, mentally retarded, moderately emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, and physically handicapped with less severe motor and learning problems), and another eight weeks assignment with severely handicapped students (i.e., profoundly retarded, trainable, the psychotic emotionally disturbed, and the severely physically handicapped). The scope of the student training program at Millersville State College begins with the undergraduates learning to tutor individual students, then small groups, and gradually working with larger groups of students. Eventually the student teacher will instruct an entire class of handicapped students, or manage/teach in a resource room.

There are approximately four hundred undergraduates in the Special Education program at Millersville State College. The majority of these students are advised by the nine faculty in the Special Education Department. The undergraduates are encouraged to join the Council for Exceptional Children campus chapter, and to participate in at least one of the five Saturday morning programs for exceptional youth from Lancaster County. Many of the CEC campus chapter sponsored Saturday morning programs provide the undergraduates with experiences which are incorporated in the Special Education 101 Orientation to Special Education course. (See the PILS Information Sheet* in the Appendix.)

Other projects conducted by the CEC campus chapter include: (1) the annual presentation of the BILS awards to energetic undergraduates; (2) the recognition of three or four outstanding cooperating teachers, and (3) a special award granted to the Outstanding Educator of the Year. These awards are presented by the Special Education Department Chairman at the Spring banquet.

The Special Education graduate program enrollment consists of one hundred students who may select one of the following tracks for concentration: Research, Administration, Severely/Profoundly Handicapped, Moderately/Mildly Handicapped, Sheltered Workshop Activity Center, Group Home Management, Gifted, Disadvantaged, and the Rutland Center-Developmental Therapy Program. A clinical practicum course is required by those in-service teachers who have not yet been certified in the field of Special Education. At the post-masters level, graduates may obtain their supervisory certificate.

*PILS is an acronym for Packet of Independent Learning in Special Education.

Student teaching is a partnership between the college and the cooperating school district. Disappointment comes when there exists a lack of commitment from both the college and the public schools in assuming a joint responsibility in the professional preparation of the student teacher. Too often the public schools are in a position of providing a service to the college but are not involved in the actual planning and operation of the student teaching program. The institutions of higher learning and the public schools will best serve the needs of the student teachers through a partnership involving the schools, the colleges, and the departments of education (Clark, 1977).

Each college or university maintains that student teachers should be provided with teaching experiences and observations under competent guidance. Whether this student teaching experience occurs through the direct administration of the college or university in a training or laboratory school, or is provided by contracting with existing public schools, respective team members' cooperation, smooth and harmonious relationships are anticipated and desired.

Part of the adventure of the student teaching program, for both the cooperating teacher and the college/university supervisor, arises from the challenge of understanding the student teacher and working out cooperative relationships with him/her. Since the current national trend toward earlier and increased field experiences is resulting in pre-service teachers being sent into public schools in greater numbers than ever

before, this means an increased demand for cooperating teachers who are willing to accept the challenge of working with the undergraduates who are at various stages in their teacher training programs. Unfortunately, the majority of these cooperating teachers have received little or no training for this important role they play in teacher education.

Often the student teaching experience seems to entail a complicated set of both positive and negative consequences that are often subtle in nature (Zeichner, 1978). The lack of articulation in most student teaching programs is underscored by the small amounts of preparation commonly provided to the cooperating teacher.

In an effort to decrease the possibilities of multiple problems arising in supervising student teachers, the Office of Clinical Education at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, began last fall offering their cooperating teachers a course on Supervision of Clinical Experiences (Moore, 1978). The course includes identifying the role of the university supervisor, the evaluation process, the expectations of the university, and the refinement of supervisory skills for the cooperating teachers. Very few institutions of higher learning have established such in-service training programs.

The selection of the cooperating teachers for the Special Education Department at Millersville State College is handled in two ways: (1) the administrator may request the college supervisor to come and observe a potential cooperating teacher

in the school system, or (2) the Special Education teacher may notify the college of his/her interest in becoming a master, cooperating teacher for the college. At the present time there is a waiting list of teachers who have requested an observation and a pre-service training session which are conducted by the college supervisor. The pre-service training session provides the potential cooperating teacher with information regarding the roles and responsibilities of the working team involved in the cooperative link of supervision of the student teacher. When cooperating teachers are screened and selected for their competencies, and subsequently receive training in specific skills necessary for supervising the undergraduates in training, the student teachers' skills and techniques seem to increase significantly.

There is no one criterion for selecting a master, cooperating teacher. In teaching, as in every craft, there are masters from whom apprentices can and should learn. The profession might gain much from these unique individuals. According to Tschudin (1978), who lists a few identifiable characteristics of 311 teachers who have either received outstanding teacher awards, or have been nominated as outstanding teachers, the following are noted:

1. provisions are made for positive incentives with a reluctance to use much punishment.
2. appears to enjoy teaching and has more fun at it than do other teachers.

3. tailors instruction to challenge the gifted, aid the less able, and provides many avenues and activities to capture the interest, imagination, and talents of all students.
4. utilizes a broad range of resources and materials.
5. is widely read.

The last characteristic in Tschudin's list, "teacher is widely read," strikes a serious cord in this writer. A survey of 741 public school teachers revealed that 50 percent of them read less than thirty minutes a week from professional journals, and five percent of the teachers reported that they never read professional journals (George, 1979). Considering the fact that one out of every ten teachers in the United States are teaching only until a better job is obtained, and that more than 37 percent of the teachers are not sure they would select teaching as a career if given this choice again, it is no surprise to discover approximately fifty percent of our teachers could be identified, according to the Wilson (1979) taxonomy, as Type II or Type III "teachers." Wilson describes the Type II teachers as those who have qualified for another job that can be pursued on weekends and evenings; Type III are teachers who just don't want to work very hard for a whole year at a time.

For more than fifty years, research on teacher effectiveness has been conducted in an effort to determine what it is that "good" teachers do that makes their teaching highly effective. Good teaching is very difficult to define because the term "good"

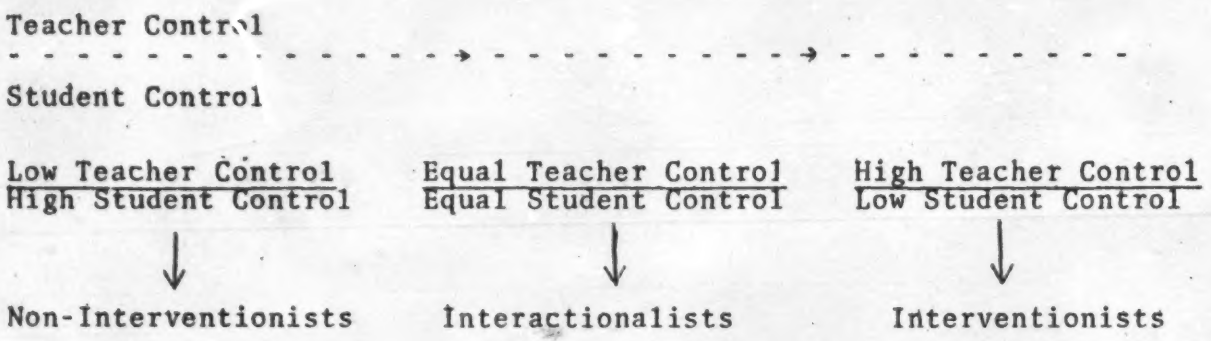
is so value-laden. Cooper (1977) states that while it remains difficult to agree on what "good" teaching is, "effective" teaching can be demonstrated. The effective teacher is one who is able to bring about intended learning outcomes.

To elicit teachers' perceived need to competencies, a 26 item questionnaire was distributed to the 1968-74 elementary and Special Education Bowling Green University graduates presently employed as teachers in Ohio. Results of the study revealed that the Special Education teachers ranked student motivation, utilization of observational techniques, developing social skills, and maintaining classroom order as the most needed competencies (Garglulo & Pigge, 1979). The results of this study reinforced Smith's (1969) edict that exceptional children need to be exposed to behavioral managers who are competent and who can explain and justify what they do.

Teachers' inability to manage students effectively is the main source of dissatisfaction for two-thirds of today's teachers (Today's Education, 1977). Therefore, when evaluating teacher effectiveness, the writer heavily considers the cooperating teachers' level of competencies in behavior management skills. Recently the Millersville State College student teachers in the field of Special Education and many of the cooperating teachers have been astounded, yet extremely pleased with The Beliefs on Discipline Inventory, a simple instrument which identifies three schools of thought along a teacher-student control continuum (Glickman & Wolfgang, 1978). The quickly self-administered and

self-scored inventory (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1980) can be used to make a general assessment of a teacher's belief on discipline according to the three schools of thought. (See Figure 1 below.)

Figure 1. Teacher-Student Control Continuum



Over the past few years, advances in developing the performance-based criteria concept is providing numerous scales and inventories for assessing teacher performance. The Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI), developed at the University of Georgia by Johnson and his research team (1979), are used in Georgia. The TPAI contains sixteen generic competencies which incorporate elements of the trait, behavioral, and situational theories of teaching. These competencies parallel closely with Reynold's (1979) list of the four factors generally differentiating effective teachers from ineffective teachers - good judgment/reasoning, a knowledge of basic content and instructional methods, a superior personality organization, and capacity to relate to others.

A teacher education program should also develop a teacher's capacity for affective responses at the same time that it encourages the development of knowledge and skill in teaching (El Laissi, 1979). The students seem to learn not only subject matter, but attitudes and behaviors; therefore, many assume teachers teach not only what they say, but what they are and what they do (McCully, 1969). It has been estimated that teachers, who may engage in at least one thousand interpersonal exchanges daily with students (Jackson, 1968), actually provide only ten percent of accepting or positive behavior to their students. Furthermore, significant amounts of data reveal that teachers who often criticize misbehavior usually have greater difficulty controlling the classroom and have minimal success in fostering student learning (Brophy & Evertson, 1976, Dunkin & Biddle, 1974, Roseshine, 1976).

A set of goals for the professional education of teachers, formulated by El Laissi (1979), contains 64 general practices pertaining to various elements in the development of perspective teachers' knowledge, skill competencies, and theoretical understandings. The social and personal models of teaching, designed by Joyce & Weil (1977) and the Skills of Teaching: series, developed by the personnel at the Carkhuff Institute of Human Technology in Amherst, Massachusetts, may be beneficial in observing or in evaluating the teachers' performance in the classrooms.

The focus on the personalistic movement in education gives

emphasis to the freedom, value, worth, dignity, and integrity of others (Combs, 1978; Raths, Pancella, & Van Ness, 1969). Children are interested in learning because the teachers care about the children; furthermore, these teachers have the teaching skills to implement their "care" (Becker, 1976; Carkhuff, Berenson, & Pierce, 1976). To summarize the rationale of affective training, teachers need to be indicted into a profession that demands not only content mastery, but also psychological awareness and insight. Without the latter, the teachers will continue to be mere technicians, not professionals (Withall, 1975).

Given the wide variety of pupil characteristics, teaching methods, educational philosophies, and goals for education, the quality of schooling depends considerably on the teacher (Washington, 1979). The cooperating teacher's teaching style provides hypothetical constructs for understanding and explaining certain important aspects of the teaching-learning process. Through a test of contingency model of teacher effectiveness (Reavis & Derlega, (1976), two general teacher styles are identified: the task-oriented teacher and the person-oriented teacher. Characteristics of the task-oriented teacher, also identified by Fischer & Fischer (1979), and other teacher styles are discussed by Dunn & Dunn (1979), Ellis (1979), and Brophy & Evertson (1976). Numerous instruments for identifying teaching styles also reveal areas that need to be expanded in order for the teacher to respond to the students' learning styles (Dunn & Dunn, 1977).

Teacher effectiveness, then, depends on the style that the teacher employs, which manifests itself in how the teacher deals with issues on control, structure, and interpersonal relations in managing instruction and classroom dynamics. These effects will be influenced by the teacher's years of teaching experience, prior training, philosophy, attitudes, and age (Tuckman, 1979).

Another component, the cooperating teacher's age, adds another dimension in evaluating competencies and performance. According to Grambs & Sesfeldt (1977), older teachers are to be prized. Older teachers are better educated; they are more "professional"; a higher proportion of them than of their younger colleagues are involved in professional education organizations; they know from their years of dealing both with children and administrators what will work and what won't. Furthermore, their years of learning on the job have given them many insights into student behavior that new training programs attempt to teach.

Another interpretation on how age affects a teacher's performance is provided by Roberts (1977). The four adult life cycles he identifies in detail are:

1. becoming an adult, or the Terrible Twenties.
2. the thirties; the transition period marked by turmoil and confusion.
3. the forties: dull realization, or the Downhill Drag.
4. after fifty: mellowing, or the Golden Age.

Student teaching is generally considered to be the most important factor in the training of a future teacher. Nearly

all teachers deem student teaching as the single most valuable component of their preparation (Mackey, Glenn & Lewis, 1977). Morris (1974) attests to the value of the cooperating teacher in the role of assisting the student teacher's achievement of the teaching competencies.

Probably the most clear and consistent finding from the research is that the cooperating teacher has a tremendous impact on the attitudes and behavior of the student teacher. In fact, it is stated that teachers teach as they are taught (Burdin, 1974). Both Price (1961) and Taylor (1969) report that student teachers' attitudes, as measured by the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory, are changed in the direction of their cooperating teachers. Thus, if changes in student teacher attitudes are to be encouraged in some predetermined direction, then it would appear that cooperating teachers need to be selected who have those attitudes toward which student teachers should move (Monahan, 1967). When one considers the importance of this relationship, it is truly amazing that such little thought is given to the matching procedure by which student teaching assignments are made (Easterly, 1978). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship can "make or break" a future teacher (Bernie, 1966). Many variables, indeed, need to be considered when the task of matching the student teacher with the cooperating teacher begins!

The nature of the pre-student teaching contacts can either

set the stage for a worthwhile student teaching experience or create an uneasy atmosphere which could pervade the entire period of professional experience. The cooperating teacher may feel pressure by having a student teacher in the room. Some teachers feel so uncomfortable that sharing a class is a real task. It is common knowledge that some people find certain types of personalities abrasive and they have difficulty establishing effective communication with them. It can become very complicated and extremely difficult when two such individuals are assigned to work together as cooperating teacher and student teacher if they are as diverse as the following illustrates:

> "Teachers are of all sorts; they range from nimble piccolos to thumping basses, from mellow horns to clashing cymbols; from sparkling champagne to flat beer, from lovable lizzies to champing Cadillacs." (Thelen, 1960, p. 16)

Minor differences in personality and teaching style can add zest to a class provided that not all the energy is put into emphasizing the dissimilarities. The university or college supervisor, being the more experienced, will normally be the first to recognize the dynamics of a situation and will take the initiative in establishing a constructive emotional climate. If, however, a conflict exists in the classroom, and the college supervisor's initial visit(s) to check on the human dynamics functioning in the classroom, are delayed, irreversible psychological damage may already be present. One classroom visitation does not always provide the necessary amount of information or feedback to know if two people can work together effectively for an extended period of time.

Past experience reveals that interviewing each future student teacher is helpful in "matching" the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. At Millersville State College, the Director of Field Services provides a questionnaire listing the potential placements available. One semester prior to the student teaching experience the undergraduate may designate his/her priorities according to (1) preferences of age levels of exceptional students; (2) the types of exceptionalities represented; (3) a choice of cooperating teacher (male or female); (4) the type of environment (inner city, urban, suburban, rural); (5) type of school setting (open, traditional, or bilingual, public, or institutional), and (6) the geographic area*. During the interviewing, conducted by the college supervisor, the future student teacher may inquire about the curriculum, the behavior management system, and about the diversity of the students in the classes identified on the questionnaire. After the future student teacher returns his/her questionnaire to the Field Services Office, the Director organizes and finalizes the communication with the respective school administrators.

A student teacher's feelings and beliefs will determine his/her basic approach to teaching and permeate every activity related to the professional experience. The cooperating teacher

*Selection of available Special Education classes where Millersville State College has placed student teachers include nine counties in Central and Southeastern Pennsylvania.

may frequently observe changes in the student teacher's feelings which result from some personal situation or from a recent experience. Although the cooperating teacher is not expected to be a professional analyst, he/she may be in a position to influence these feelings and modify behavior. The cooperating teacher needs to understand some of the broader personal concerns of the student teacher. For example, specific concerns frequently expressed by many student teachers include: problems related to romance, economic problems, family conflicts, fear (real or imaginary), feelings of social inadequacy, or feelings of inferiority.

In spite of the best university or college program in preparation, screening, and orientation to student teaching, some students will enter the professional semester unable to cope with the demands of teaching. If a serious problem does develop in the classroom, a great amount of concern, a tremendous amount of time and energy on the part of the cooperating teacher and supervisor will be invested. The following guidelines (Henry & Beasley, 1972) may be used as a frame of reference for enhancing the possibility of the student teacher's progress, or for correcting, with a minimum of difficulty, some worries.

1. Be available for conversation and discussion.
2. Discuss the problem with the student teacher in an objective manner. (Discover what is bothering him/her, analyze the cause, and discuss possible alternatives in attempting to reach a solution or course of action.)

3. Show a sincere interest in the problem.
4. Try to put the problem in a proper context.
5. Know the facts before action is taken.
6. Specify plans of action which will possibly alleviate the difficulty.
7. Treat the student teacher as a peer and not as an inferior.
8. Recognize and demonstrate confidence in the student teacher.
9. Provide situations in which the student teacher can experience success.
10. See that the student teacher feels accepted and needed.
11. Capitalize on the student teacher's special skills or interests.
12. Be a good listener.

There are elements within the framework of the role of the cooperating teacher which bring a rich return and there are elements that seem to make it a lonely quest. Feelings become mixed. At other times, the reward or the loneliness appears distinct and the feelings are clearcut. The cooperating teacher's role, as is the student teacher's responsibilities produce both a "tear and a smile."

"I would not exchange the sorrows of my heart for the joys of the multitude. And I would not have the tears that sadness makes to flow from my every part turn into laughter. I would that my life remain a tear and a smile."

(Eibran, 1950, p. 3)

And what are the results of the time, the tithe, and the talent each student teacher invests into the student teaching experience? Perhaps the student teacher will begin a life cycle of commitment and service which will assist in transforming him/her into a humane teacher.

What is a teacher?

"We seem to come in all sizes and shapes, with many variations and dimensions to our teaching philosophies, abilities, creativeness and commitment to the task, our feelings about ourselves and our feelings and understandings of the children we have come to the profession for. The children also come in multi-combinations and dimensions offering us many challenges - some of which are exciting and fulfilling, while others are sometimes pretty frightening, discouraging, or depressing to us. We can become alternately enthusiastic and totally discouraged, leaving us with the accompanying self-feelings of worth or failure. We become angry, sad, joyous, frustrated, confident, defeated, trusted, lonely, courageous, demanding, understanding, threatened, warm. We are human but not humane."

(Meyer, 1979, p. 63)

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